year 2001-02, keeping in view the number of inmates and the scale of issue. The State Government has also been allocated 36420 tonnes of rice and 37000 tonnes of wheat under the wheat based Nutrition Programme under the Integrated Child Develoment Services (ICDS) Programme for the year 2001-02. The request regarding allocation of foodgrains for old age homes/destitute homes will be considered on receipt of detailed information from the State Government.

Foodgrain stocks

*270. PROF. A. LAKSHMISAGAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the buffer stock position of foodgrains at the end of 2001 and procurement target during 2002;

(b) the estimated loss of foodgrains during 2001 in comparison to the loss during 1999;

(c) whether Government have considered the possibility of the existing food security system to manage storage of foodgrains in the warehouses;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any change in the procurement and distribution policy is contemplated by Government to minimise the annual losses of foodgrains; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) As on December 31, 2001, 581.12 lakh tonnes of foodgrains were available in the Central Pool.

The procurement operations are voluntary in nature and the farmers have the choice to sell their produce to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) or State Governments or in the open market as is advantageous to them. Hence, no targets are fixed for the purpose of procurement.

(b) As against the loss of 4.49 lakh tonnes expected during

1999-2000, the transit and storage losses during 2000-2001 are estimated to be around 4.08 lakh tonnes.

(c) and (d) As on February 1, 2002, there were 564.26 lakh tonnes of foodgrains in the Central Pool. The storage capacity available with the FCI and State agencies is 568.98 lakh tonnes. The field officers of FCI have been delegated full powers to hire additional storage capacity, as and when considered necessary. The FCI has also given seven years guarantee for the construction of 83.26 lakh tonnes storage capacity (Covered) by the State agencies/CWC in Andhra Prasdeh, Haryana, Orissa, Punjab, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh. Under the National Storage Policy, silos with a capacity of 21 lakh tonnes are proposed to be constructed in Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. FCI has also a Plan scheme for the construction of storage capacity. The target for the Tenth Five Year Plan is 6.78 lakh tonnes.

(e) and (f) The Government has constituted a High Level Committee to formulate a Long Term Grain Policy for the country under the Chairmanship of Prof. Abhijit Sen. The Committee is expected to submit its final report shortly. However, with a view to minimize the losses, the following steps are being taken:

(i) installation of weight bridges;

(ii) tightening of security at depots; intensifying surprise checks; ensuring regular stock verification;

(iii) encouraging double line machine stitching of bags;

(iv) induction of Central Industrial Security Force at vulnerable depots to curb theft and pilferage;

(v) streamlining procedures and documentation for transparency and accountability in operations;

(vi) regular and surprise inspection of depots by senior officers;

(vii) improvement in size and quality of gunnies;

(viii) augmentation of covered storage capacity; and

(ix) introduction of bulk handling storage and transportation of foodgrains stocks.